Suggested Reading: A Study Guide

By Mark Weber
February 2021. Revised Feb. 2022

In an age when vast amounts of information from a wide range of sources are instantly available online, it can be difficult to sort out what's reliable, useful, and trustworthy. In response to many inquiries over the years, here are recommended books on some important historical topics. This listing is neither exhaustive nor final. Additional subject categories and titles are planned, and descriptions may be revised or updated.

The Second World War

Stalin's War: A New History of World War II, by Sean McMeekin. In this 825-page work of scholarly synthesis, packed with eye-opening facts, keen observations and shrewd insights, an American historian dismantles the widely accepted "official" view of the great global conflict that has so profoundly shaped the modern age, and how Americans think of themselves and their country's role in the world.

The author dismantles the simplistic view, relentlessly promoted by Hollywood and accepted by millions of Americans, of World War II as a righteous "good war" in which the soldiers of "freedom" heroically vanquished the forces of evil. He explains in this iconoclastic and overdue reassessment that it was Stalin, not Hitler, who was the central animating figure of World War II. Drawing on wide-ranging research in Russian, European and US archives, McMeekin shows that it was the dictator in Moscow, not Hitler, who envisioned and prepared for a titanic global conflict, one in which the Soviet regime and Communism would emerge as the great victor.

McMeekin details the belligerent character of the Soviet regime, and especially Stalin's aggressive policies of 1939-1941 and his ambitious plans for the future – all of which made a clash with Germany and her European allies inevitable. Stalin had already struck against six countries, and had built an enormous air, land and naval force for further aggression, when German and German-allied forces struck against the USSR in June 1941. Hitler's decision to strike against the Red empire, the author shows, was made only after the mortal threat to Europe and Germany posed by the immense Soviet military buildup and Stalin's hostile intentions, were manifestly clear.

McMeekin tracks the astonishing scale of US economic and military aid to the Soviet Union during the conflict. So important was this aid, he suggests, that it may have been crucial in saving the Stalin regime from destruction, and in any case enabled the Red Army to conquer most of Eurasia, from Berlin to Beijing. The US government's indulgently pro-Soviet outlook and policies, he explains, made a mockery of American pretentions of concern for justice

and international law, or for victims of oppression and tyranny.

McMeekin also shows how US President Roosevelt's delusional view of the Soviets drove policies that brought oppression and misery to many millions. The breathtakingly misguided wartime views and policies of Roosevelt and other high-ranking US officials, he explains, were based on ignorance or delusional naiveté about the Soviet regime, and driven by an utterly unrealistic vision of the postwar world.

McMeekin raises troubling questions about Allied aims in World War II, and the ultimate cost and merit of America's role in the conflict. In effect, he suggests, Americans in World War II killed, died and sacrificed – in least in large measure – "to make much of Europe and Asia safe for Communism." "Still more uncomfortable questions," he writes, "surround matters such as Britain's misleading promises to Poland in 1939, which encouraged Polish leaders to resist Hitler on the largely mistaken understanding that Britain and France would render them active armed assistance against Germany; the Allies' rejection of German peace feelers in October 1939, after the fall of Poland; [and] Churchill's refusal to parley in June-July 1940, after the fall of Norway, France and the Low Countries …"

Churchill, Hitler and 'The Unnecessary War': How Britain Lost Its Empire and the West Lost the World, by Patrick J. Buchanan. A readable and persuasive debunking of the generally accepted story of the origins, trajectory, and consequences of the Second World War, by one of America's most astute and influential public affairs commentators. The author draws on the work of more than a hundred historians to trace the great failures of judgment that consigned millions to decades of subjugation under Soviet tyranny, and ended Europe's central role in world affairs. This is also a valuable treatment of the origins and consequences of the First World War, and a sharp critique of the "cult" of Winston Churchill. Buchanan concludes with timely warnings about US foreign policy today.

Human Smoke: The Beginnings of World War II, the End of Civilization, by Nicholson Baker. An important anti-war work that points out the how the belligerents violated established and widely accepted norms of "civilized" warfare, and plunged the world into new depths of barbarism. Noteworthy is the author's unflattering highlighting of Winston Churchill and his role.

Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War, by Paul Fussell. Moving, vivid look at the deeply harmful psychological impact of war on human beings, both as individuals and socially. An eloquent and sometimes bitter rebuke of the romanticized view of World War II as the "good war."

History of the Second World War, by B. H Liddel-Hart, and, *The Second World War*, by J. F. C. Fuller. Two solid, reliable overviews of World War II, each by an outstanding British historian.

The Origins of the Second World War, by A. J. P. Taylor. An eminent British historian provides a brilliant critique of the widely accepted, "official" view of

the origins of the 1939 conflict. Because the thesis of this book is so startlingly contrary to the prevailing view of Hitler and the origins of World War II, it came under fierce criticism when it was first published in 1961. All the same, its scholarship has held up well in the decades since. More recent evidence has strengthened the conclusions of this impressively argued and elegantly written study. The war between Germany, Poland, Britain and France that broke out in September 1939, the author shows, was not the result of an intentional plan by Hitler. “Far from wanting war, a general war was the last thing he wanted,” Taylor writes. “The war of 1939, far from being premeditated, was a mistake, the result on both sides of diplomatic blunders.”

Advance to Barbarism, by Frederick J. P. Veale. In this humane and provocative study, the author - an English attorney with a profound understanding of military history - skillfully debunks the simplistic image of World War II as a conflict between Good and Evil. Veale examines, for example, the holocaust of civilians perpetrated by the Allies, as in the infamous firebombing attacks on Dresden and Hamburg. He shows that it was Britain's wartime leaders, not Hitler, who introduced the policy of strategic terror bombing. Establishes the illegality, immorality, and hypocrisy of the Nuremberg Trials. Harry Elmer Barnes called this “a very readable and impressive volume and a major contribution to any rational peace movement.”

The Chief Culprit: Stalin's Grand Design to Start World War II, by Viktor Suvorov (Vladimir Rezun). The author, a Russian-born former officer of Soviet military intelligence, presents detailed evidence to show that Soviet leader Stalin was preparing to attack Germany and Europe in 1941, and that Hitler beat him to the punch. Persuasively establishes that Hitler struck eastwards because he anticipated an imminent Soviet assault. Published by the prestigious Naval Institute Press.

America's Second Crusade, by William Henry Chamberlin. An award-winning American journalist and historian takes a close, critical look at the origins, course, and consequences of the US role in World War II. In this lucid and carefully researched survey, he examines President Roosevelt's illegal efforts to push the US into war, the background story of the Pearl Harbor attack, US betrayal of its proclaimed principles, America's wartime alliance with Stalinist Russia, the British-American stab-in-the-back of Poland, the hypocrisy and injustice of the Nuremberg trials, and more. Also reviews the calamitous results of America's entry into the First World War. In Chamberlin's view, the policies of the US leaders in the years before, during, and after World War II were delusional and hypocritical, and ultimately failed to achieve their stated goals.

‘Twas a Famous Victory: Deception and Propaganda in the War With Germany, by Benjamin Colby. This measured, well-researched book shows how US officials and the American media misled the public during World War II about important realities of the global conflict. Looks at how politicians, Hollywood

producers, print media editors, and others denied or whitewashed Soviet atrocities and ambitions, and promoted hatred against Germans. The US mass media also massively deceived Americans about their President's underhanded measures to bring the US into the European conflict, including his secretive, illegal war against Germany in 1940 and 194l. While President Roosevelt and British premier Churchill were loudly proclaiming their devotion to “democracy” and “freedom,” this book shows, the Allied leaders were betraying those pledges with secret arrangements to turn over millions to the brutal rule of Soviet dictator Stalin. The author also looks at the victorious Allies' harsh treatment of the people of defeated and prostrate Germany.

Hitler's War: Germany's Key Strategic Decisions, 1940-1945, by Heinz Magenheimer. An Austrian military historian reviews the information and options that were available, and which seemed feasible and reasonable, to Hitler and other German military leaders at each critical phase of the war, and shows how and why decisions were made. In this careful examination of Germany's conduct of World War II, the author reviews the various alternative policies and strategies that Hitler and the German leadership had to consider, and the reasoning behind the decisions that were taken. He identifies the policies that led to German military setbacks and, ultimately, to calamitous defeat.

The Last European War 1939-1941, by John Lukacs. A distinctive, thought-provoking perspective on World War II by a prolific Hungarian-born historian. Packed with shrewd insights and sparkling observations. Valuable for an understanding of the meaning and profound tragedy of the twentieth century, especially as experienced in Central Europe.

Warlords, by Simon Berthon and Joanna Potts. Subtitled “An extraordinary re-creation of World War II through the eyes and minds of Hitler, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin.” The authors present an innovative and intriguing look at the global conflict, from May 1940 to April 1945, from the perspectives of the wartime leaders of Germany, Britain, the USA, and the Soviet Union. “This book,” say the authors in the foreword, “unashamedly takes the view that, in the war of 1939-1945, the personal decisions of the four titans at its heart also dictated its outbreak, its course and its consequences.” In the view of *The World War II Quarterly*, “Berthon and Potts show brilliantly how the four men shaped a new world ... Articulate, crisp, and informed, this is a book worth reading.” The *Library Journal* called it “A lively narrative that shifts quickly from scene to scene, taking the reader along for the ride.”

After the Reich: The Brutal History of the Allied Occupation, by Giles MacDonogh. A British historian details how the ruined and prostrate Reich (including Austria) was systematically raped and robbed, and how many Germans who survived the war were either killed in cold blood or deliberately left to die of disease, cold, malnutrition, or starvation.

Nemesis at Potsdam: The Expulsion of the Germans From the East, by Alfred M. de Zayas. A moving account of the horrific flight and mass expulsion after World War II of some 14 million German-speaking men, women, and children from their ancestral homelands in eastern and central Europe. Some two million civilians, mostly women and children, died in this massive but largely forgotten “ethnic cleansing” – one of the worst human calamities of modern times.

The German Expellees: Victims in War and Peace, by Alfred M. de Zayas. A capable and highly-regarded scholar examines the grim but little-known fate of the millions of German civilians who came under Soviet rule as the Red Army swept across Eastern and Central Europe in the final months of World War II. On the basis of extensive research, he reviews not only the terrible ordeal of suffering, killing, and destruction imposed on these far-flung German communities, but also sketches their impressive record of achievement over the centuries.

Back Door to War: The Roosevelt Foreign Policy, 1933-1941, by Charles Callan Tansill. A comprehensive, scholarly survey by a leading twentieth-century American diplomatic historian. Explains how President Roosevelt turned to a policy of provoking war with Japan after vainly seeking to bring the US directly into the European conflict. Shows how Roosevelt succeeded in involving the US in the European conflict by provoking war with Japan. Includes valuable material on the European diplomatic situation in the 1930s.

Freedom Betrayed: Herbert Hoover's Secret History of the Second World War and Its Aftermath (George H. Nash, editor). A valuable examination by a former US president of the origins and course of World War II and its Cold War aftermath, and particularly President Franklin Roosevelt's foreign policy in the years before the 1941 Pearl Harbor attack, as well as during the war. David Kennedy, professor of history emeritus at Stanford University, calls this “a must-read for anyone interested in the most consequential upheaval of the twentieth century.” Even before Hoover took office as president in 1929, he was already esteemed as an accomplished engineer in four continents, a very successful businessman, and a capable administrator of overseas relief. Hoover devoted years of thought and research to this detailed work, which he considered his *magnum opus*. He shows how President Franklin Roosevelt deceitfully maneuvered the United States into an undeclared and illegal naval war with Germany in 1941. He shows how Roosevelt foolishly appeased Soviet dictator Stalin. Hoover also looks at the war's calamitous consequences, including the expansion of the Soviet empire and the “cold war” US-Soviet rivalry.

Pearl Harbor: The Story of the Secret War, by George Morgenstern. This classic work remains unsurpassed as the best one-volume look at the background to the Japanese attack on Hawaii in December 1941. Shows how the policies of the Japanese and US governments led inexorably to war. The

author stresses the vigorous Japanese peace efforts and the failure of Washington authorities adequately to warn the Hawaiian commanders.

Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace: A Critical Examination of the Foreign Policy of Franklin D. Roosevelt and its Aftermath, edited by Harry Elmer Barnes. A collection of incisive essays by leading independent American historians on every aspect of President Roosevelt's road to war. Shows how he maneuvered the US, against the wishes of most of Americans, into war against Germany and Japan, and how his war policy ended in betrayal, disillusion, and new conflict. Establishes convincingly that US participation in World War II was neither necessary, desirable, nor just. Edited by one of the most influential American scholars of the twentieth century. Concise, scintillating essays by outstanding independent scholars, including Charles C. Tansill, F. R. Sanborn, W. L. Neumann, G. Morgenstern, Percy L. Graves, Wm. H. Chamberlin, G.A. Lundberg, and Barnes himself. Shows how the US made a mockery of its own professed ideals during the “Good War.” Highly relevant for an understanding of how the US came to the calamitous military adventurism of more recent years.

Nuremberg: The Last Battle, by David Irving. An outstanding but much-maligned British scholar of World War II and Third Reich history closely examines the “Trial of Century” - the Nuremberg Tribunal of 1945-46. A masterwork of startling facts and myth-busting perspective - packed with revelations from long-suppressed private diaries and letters of judges, prosecutors, defendants and witnesses. Establishes that the Allies who sat in judgment were themselves guilty of many of the crimes for which the German defendants were tried and hanged. Exposes the Tribunal's double standard - with the Allies acting as judge, prosecutor, jury, and executioner. Shows how Auschwitz Commandant Höss and other Germans were tortured to produce phony “evidence” that is still widely accepted today.

President Roosevelt and the Coming of War, 1941, by Charles A. Beard. An eminent American historian takes a highly critical look at the evolution of Roosevelt's foreign policy from “isolationism” to interventionism and war. Published by Yale University Press. This scholarly, detailed account examines the political and diplomatic maneuvering during the months before the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor.

March 1939: The British Guarantee to Poland, by Simon Newman. Definitive study of how Britain's leaders set aside the policy of “appeasement” to issue a fateful guarantee of military support for Poland that led inevitably to war with Germany. Published by Oxford University Press. Carefully reviews the maneuvering that brought on a European war. British policy under Prime Minister Chamberlain was not based on weakness or naïve trust in Hitler, as some historians have claimed, but rather on a long-term strategy of countering Third Reich Germany. The author demonstrates that British leaders knew that their March 1939 “blank check” guarantee of military

support to Poland would almost certainly lead to armed conflict, but preferred war to a peaceful settlement between Germany and Poland over the Danzig-Corridor dispute. Confirms that Hitler's goal was an alliance with Britain, not war.

Hitler vs. Stalin, 1941-1945, by John Mosier. A fresh, well-informed look at the most important battle theater of World War II, the “Eastern Front.” This is where the great global conflict was decided. The author rejects the conventional view that Hitler was mad to think he could defeat the USSR, and argues instead that Germany came close to winning. All too many historians, Mosier contends, have uncritically accepted exaggerated and self-serving Soviet claims.

The Suicide of Europe, by Mihail (Michel) Sturdza. This memoir by a Romanian diplomat who served for a time as his country's foreign minister is a highly critical look at Allied policy during World War II. Sturdza, a nobleman who joined the Christian-nationalist “Legionary” movement of Corneliu Codreanu, had a long career in his country's foreign service, including posts as ambassador.

Onward Christian Soldiers, by Donald Day. A remarkably frank book by an exceptionally well- informed American journalist who for 20 years was correspondent in northern Europe for the *Chicago Tribune*. In part a memoir, in part an insightful examination of social and political conditions in northeastern Europe during the interwar era, and in part a plea on behalf of Finland and the other countries that fought against the Soviet Union in World War II.

Stalin's War of Extermination, 1941-1945: Planning, Realization and Documentation, by Joachim Hoffmann. Based in large measure on little-known Soviet documents, an outstanding German historian provides a grim, carefully researched indictment of Soviet policies and conduct during the Second World War. (Translation of *Stalins Vernichtungskrieg 1941-1945*.)

The Eastern Front, by Leon Degrelle. A vivid, moving first-hand account of World War II combat against the Soviets, provided by a brilliant young Belgian who volunteered for frontline service in 1941, and fought to the bitter end. Written by an unapologetic admirer of Hitler, this is also a defense of the Axis cause in World War II.

Apocalypse 1945: The Destruction of Dresden, by David Irving. Mass killing and terrorism were the sole objectives of the horrific February 1945 Allied air attack on Dresden, which British diplomat and author Harold Nicolson called “the single greatest holocaust by war.” Some 2,000 British and American bombers took part in the devastating raid on an undefended city packed with masses of women and children fleeing advancing Soviet forces. This beautiful German city - one of Europe's great cultural and architectural treasures - had no importance as a military target. Here is the full story - from the

perspectives of both perpetrators and victims - including the historical-political context, of the horrific firestorm raid that took the lives of tens of thousands of innocent civilians who were burned alive, suffocated, or succumbed to poisonous fumes.

Memoirs: Ten Years and Twenty Days, by Karl Dönitz. Commander of Germany's formidable World War II submarine fleet, then Supreme Naval Commander, and finally Hitler's successor in the last days of the Third Reich, the author has been condemned as a “Nazi criminal” and praised as one of the most brilliant and honorable military leaders of the war. In the great “Battle of the Atlantic,” his “wolfpack” tactics enabled a handful of U-boats to sink 14.5 million tons of Allied merchant and naval shipping. Sentenced to ten years imprisonment by the Nuremberg Tribunal, Dönitz wrote this memoir upon his release. (Translation of *Zehn Jahre, Zwanzig Tage*.) In a clear, firm style he discusses the planning and execution of the U-boat campaign, America's “neutrality” before its entry into the war, the Normandy D-Day invasion, the July 1944 bomb plot, his encounters with Raeder, Göring, Speer, Himmler and Hitler, his brief tenure as the last head of the German Reich, and much more.

Gruesome Harvest: The Costly Attempt to Exterminate the People of Germany, by Ralph Franklin Keeling. This well-researched and movingly written book – originally published in 1947 – is still one of the best works on the post-war treatment of conquered Germany. Looks at the amputation of centuries-old German territories, the mass expulsions of German civilians, the enslavement of German labor, the vindictive Morgenthau proposals, the sacking of German industry and the looting of German capital, the cynical designs of the Kremlin, the astounding naiveté and trust of US leaders toward the Soviet Union, the fallacies of “denazification” and “reeducation,” and the persistent problem of German “collective guilt.”

The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb, by Gar Alperowitz. Shows that American leaders did not have to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to bring about Japan's surrender.

1940: Myth and Reality, by Clive Ponting. In this concise work, a British historian critically examines widely accepted views about Britain's policies and the fateful decisions of its leaders during the critical 1939-1941 period. He effectively dismantles a range of popular legends, including myths about London's 1938-1939 policy of “appeasement,” Winston Churchill's “bulldog” rhetoric and decisions, the British role in the April 1940 Norway campaign, and the role in May-June 1940 of British and French forces in the Low Countries and France. As Ponting shows, British policy in those years was in large measure based on wishful thinking or gross misunderstanding of important realities. Following the defeat of France in June 1940, Britain had no realistic prospect whatsoever of defeating Germany without enormous outside help. This meant that leaders in London faced the difficult choice of either accepting Hitler's offers of peace (which were remarkably

magnanimous) or holding out for support from the United States. The historic decisions by Britain's leaders, above all by Churchill, to reject German peace proposals and continue the war to overthrow the Hitler regime, inevitably meant Britain's inexorable subordination to, and dependency on, the United States. The year “1940 marked the end of Britain as an independent power,” concludes Ponting. Britain, Europe, and the world are still dealing with the long-term consequences of those decisions.

American History

Out of Our Past: The Forces that Shaped Modern America, by Carl N. Degler. (Third edition). A brilliant one-volume narrative history of the US, from the early settlements by Europeans to the 1970s, by a perceptive, knowledgeable historian. Praised by William Henry Chamberlin as a “skillful, discriminating distillation of the work of many experts in various fields ... [The author] possesses a gift, too rare among historical scholars, of lucid exposition and an excellent readable style.”

America in Our Time, by Godfrey Hodgson. A seasoned and knowledgeable British journalist reviews the development of the USA - socially, culturally, politically and economically - from the end of World War II to the early 1970s. In a work packed with keen insights and astute observations, the author views America and Americans with a mix of affection and detachment. In a review of this book for *The New Republic*, Paul Starr wrote: “Hodgson brings to the task an expansive vision, a first-rate command of work in a variety of fields (particularly the social sciences), a grasp of the complexities and paradoxes of American life, and a critical sympathy for this subject.”

America Revised: History Textbooks in the Twentieth Century, by Frances Fitzgerald. An acclaimed American author describes how the narrative of US history, as presented in school textbooks, gets made and re-made. One reviewer wrote of this book: “An eminently readable report that transcends in importance its immediate subject matter, for, ultimately, *America Revised* is a book about the manipulation of the past for commercial and ideological reasons.” The author traces how the textbook portrayal of American history has changed drastically over the decades. During the 1950s, she shows, they presented a buoyant, upbeat, and even triumphalist view of America and its trajectory. As textbooks have become ever more “inclusive” and “diverse” since the 1960s, she shows, their portrayal of American history and society has become steadily, and inevitably, ever more unfocused and confused. For the younger readers for whom they are “produced,” the textbooks have also become markedly less interesting and engaging.

Profiles in Courage, by John F. Kennedy. This short, well-written work highlights the lives of US Senators who took stands for principle in defiance of

colleagues, constituents and popular opinion, often with ruinous consequences for themselves and their careers. Kennedy warns against the readiness of all too many politicians to put stature and personal interest above principle or concern for the national welfare. “A nation which has forgotten the quality of courage which in the past has been brought to public life,” he wrote, “is not as likely to insist upon or reward that quality in its chosen leaders today - and in fact we have forgotten.” This book is all the more worth reading during this era of social discord, national confusion, and widespread cynicism. Kennedy wrote this best-selling work while he was serving as a US Senator during the 1950s, and before he became president. (His friend Theodore Sorensen was so involved with the book's writing and editing that he deserves to be regarded at least as its co-author.)

So drastically has America changed since Profiles was written that, by today's standards, it is hopelessly “unenlightened.” Every one of the individuals singled out for praise is a white man, including several who today would be regarded as “white supremacists.” The era of imposed “Reconstruction” rule in the states of the former Confederacy following the end of the Civil War is called “a black nightmare the South never could forget.” One chapter is devoted to Robert A. Taft, whom Kennedy regarded as a man of “unflinching courage,” and whom he praised for his principled opposition to the postwar Allied trials of the leaders of defeated Germany. As the book notes, the US government joined in punishing German leaders by violating the basic legal standards that Americans claim to honor and uphold.

The American Political Tradition, by Richard Hofstadter. Since it was first published in 1948, this has been one of the most influential and widely read works of American history. Especially valuable for an understanding of the relation between power and ideas in the American experience. In twelve elegantly written biographical chapters, the author focuses on specific individuals or groups of individuals who have been important, particularly in terms of their impact on how Americans view themselves, their country and the world. The book begins with the “Founding Fathers” and Thomas Jefferson, and goes on to highlight Andrew Jackson, John C. Calhoun, Abraham Lincoln, William Jennings Bryan, and others, to conclude with a chapter on Franklin Roosevelt.

The author identifies the shared values and premises about people, life and society that enabled Americans to maintain for many years a generally high level of stability and continuity in the country's political life. No astute reader today will fail to recognize that the consensus views identified by the author have been breaking down during the second half of the twentieth century, and even more rapidly in the first decades of this century.

International Relations

Memoirs, by George F. Kennan. In this deservedly acclaimed work, an unusually perceptive and influential American diplomat and scholar provides a broad, insightful, and sometimes sharply critical review of US foreign policy during one of the most momentous eras of modern history. The first volume covers the years 1925-1950, while the second spans 1950-1963. Among the many who have praised Kennan's *Memoirs* was the eminent British historian Donald Cameron Watt: “Delightfully written and appallingly frank ... Mr. Kennan writes with a freedom and a sensitivity which carry the reader easily into a much deeper understanding of the difficulties of foreign policy making in a mass democracy of the American model.”

Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace, by Hans J. Morgenthau. This very influential work has held up well as a reliable basic text on international relations. Grounded in a broad awareness of history, the author builds a systematic argument for a pragmatic, “realist” approach to international relations, which means understanding and accepting that all nations invariably act to maximize their own interests. “The whole political life of a nation, particularly of a democratic nation, from the local to the national level, is a continuous struggle for power,” he writes. “International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power,” he further notes. “The struggle for power is universal in time and space and is an undeniable fact of experience.”

To be successful, the author contends, a nation's foreign policy must not be colored by a sentimental or self-righteous outlook. It is therefore unproductive and ultimately foolish to adopt a foreign policy designed to promote “human rights” or fight “evil” regimes, or for similarly “noble” motives. In today's world, a wise foreign policy should aim for a balance of power, grounding relations between states in understandings of how the interests of the various individual nations can be maximized with a minimum of discord. The author warns: “The statesman must think in terms of the national interest, conceived as power among other powers. The popular mind, unaware of the fine distinctions of the statesman's thinking, reasons more often than not in the simple moralistic and legalistic terms of absolute good and absolute evil.”

The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy and the End of the Republic, by Chalmers Johnson. In this provocative and persuasively argued book, the author shows how America has shifted far from the foreign policy of the nation's founders to become a modern “New Rome” neo-imperial power. He presents a scathing indictment of US military and foreign policy since the 1940s. The *Boston Globe* called this book “trenchantly argued, comprehensively documented ... worthy of the republic it seeks to defend.” Since World War II, the author explains, Americans have witnessed the growth of the “imperial presidency,” with ever-expanding presidential powers, especially in foreign policy. He contends that leaders of both major US political parties, along with virtually the entire mainstream media, promote and sustain America's role as a self-righteous and arrogant power that puts might, prestige and riches for the few ahead of what's best for the great

majority of Americans, or for humanity.

He recalls the rhetoric and slogans given by US leaders to validate or excuse American aggression. President George W. Bush, he notes, justified aggression and preemptive war by insisting that the United States offers the “single sustainable model for national success,” one that is “right and true for every person in every society.” Bush justified his country's imperial role in the world with the claim that the US is “the greatest force for good in history.” The drive to export US “goodness,” the author points out, has a divine-like quality, and long antedates Bush.

Now, with the US role in the world anchored in more than 700 military bases in more than 100 countries around the globe, the author looks to the future with anxiety. The American republic is gone forever, he suggests, and he sees little prospect that the influential forces that push for war can effectively be countered. He anticipates a state of perpetual war, involving more military expenditures and overseas expansion, and presidents who will continue to eclipse or ignore Congress. He fears economic bankruptcy as one president after another continues to underwrite these adventures with congressional blank check support while neglecting growing problems of education, health care, and a decaying infrastructure.

Diplomacy, by Henry Kissinger. A sweeping and detailed work on the craft, art and challenge of international relations. The author writes not only as an important scholar of the subject, but also as one who played a major role in shaping US foreign policy as National Security Advisor and as Secretary of State. This book spans more than three centuries of history, with an emphasis on America's role in the world. He shows how different societies have developed different ways of conducting foreign policy, reflecting the prevailing worldview and fundamental interests of each. Written with a good balance of intimacy and detachment, the author is at times notably harsh in his assessment of US foreign policy during much of the twentieth century.

American Diplomacy 1900-1950, by George F. Kennan. A succinct introductory overview of US relations with the rest of the world during the first half of the twentieth century, from the vantage point of an eminent American diplomat. A country's success in global affairs, he warns, depends in large measure on how successfully it handles its challenges at home. The United States and other liberal-democratic countries, he writes, seem unable to formulate and carry through policies grounded in basic interests and directed at long-range goals. The author calls for a US foreign policy “unsullied by arrogance or hostility toward other people or delusions of superiority,” and carried out with “an attitude of detachment and soberness and readiness to reserve judgment.” Accordingly, he rejects the widely accepted triumphalist view of the two world wars of the twentieth century, and especially of America's role in them. He argues for a more “professional” handling of US foreign policy, but concedes that Washington will most likely continue its practice of “diplomacy by dilettantism”

The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939, by Edward Hallett Carr. A brilliant work by a great British historian, diplomat and journalist. A valuable introduction to the study of international relations. First published in 1939. The book's title may perhaps be misleading, because the principles laid out by the author and his many shrewd observations are eminently relevant for any age, and not least our own.

Communism, Marxism and the Soviet Union

Communism: A History, by Richard Pipes. The author brings a lifetime of scholarship and thought to this concise work, which brilliantly reviews the history, character and impact of the secular creed that won support from so many, and which was the guiding ideology of the Soviet Union, Maoist China, and other countries. Because the ambitious Communist effort to make a new society was based on an unworkable egalitarian-universalist ideology, it was not only doomed to failure, it also brought immense hardship, human suffering, and death for many millions.

Three 'Whys' of the Russian Revolution, by Richard Pipes. In this concise work, an outstanding historian tackles three key questions: Why did Tsarism fall? Why did the Bolsheviks triumph? Why did Stalin succeed Lenin?

Lenin: A New Biography, by Dimitri Volkogonov. A valuable look at the life and impact of the dedicated Marxist revolutionary who led the Bolshevik takeover of Russia and founded the Soviet Union. This work makes use of previously suppressed sources.

The Great Terror, by Robert Conquest. Still unrivaled as the best one-volume treatment of the enormous misery, suffering and death wrought by the Soviet regime, especially during the Stalin era. "Exact numbers may never be known with complete certainty," the author writes, "but the total of deaths caused by the whole range of Soviet regime's terrors can hardly be *lower* than some fifteen million." Conquest sharply criticizes Western intellectuals for their blindness towards the realities of the Soviet Union, especially during the late 1930s and World War II. Harrison Salisbury – himself a noted historian and specialist of Russia – called this book "brilliant ... not only an odyssey of madness, tragedy, and sadism, but a work of scholarship and literary craftsmanship."

Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin, by George Kennan. A brilliant, elegantly written examination of relations between Soviet Russia and the major Western countries, from the birth of the Soviet regime during World War I to the late 1940s. The author, an outstanding American historian and diplomat, was a specialist of Russian and Soviet history, and served for a time as US ambassador in Moscow. He seeks to "stress the necessity of an American outlook which accepts the obligations of maturity and consents to

operate in a world of relative and unstable values." He urges Americans, and especially US leaders, "above all, to avoid petulance and self-indulgence: in our view of history, in our view of ourselves, in our decisions, and in our behavior as a nation."

The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression. Editor: Stéphane Courtois. Several European scholars contributed to this encyclopedic work, which documents the history of political repressions by Communist states, including genocides, extrajudicial killings, deportations, killings in camps, and artificially created famines. Published originally in French, the sheer scale of detail amassed in this international bestseller is remarkable. "Communist regimes turned mass crime into a full-blown system of government," writes Courtois, and are responsible for a greater number of deaths than Nazism or any other political system. The number of people killed by Communist governments - through executions, man-made famine, war, mass deportations, massacres, and so forth - amounts to more than 94 million, of whom some 20 million were victims of the Soviet Union.

The Communist Manifesto, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Even though many years have passed since it first appeared, this very influential booklet is still worth reading. It lays out in vigorous prose the basic outlook of the dogmatic secular religion that for decades inspired so many millions around the world. Its most famous passages still have the power to move and inspire. The term "Communist" – like the label "Fascist" –- is much more often used to smear and vilify than to identify or explain. This booklet, therefore, should not be considered any kind of guide to the motives, thoughts, or goals of those who today are called Communists or Marxists.

Zionism, US-Israel Relations, and the 'Jewish Question'

The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy, by John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt. The single best study available on the "Israel Lobby" and its daunting impact on American policy. Two outstanding scholars of international affairs – one a professor at the University of Chicago, and the other a professor at Harvard University – take a close look at the pro-Israel network, its formidable role in shaping US foreign policy, and its harmful consequences for America and the world. This widely discussed book provoked outrage, especially in the Jewish community, as well as gratitude from many more for boldly challenging what had been a taboo issue in the US. In this carefully written and copiously referenced work, the authors present compelling evidence and persuasive arguments to show that the Lobby and its supporters have greatly harmed authentic American national interests. They also detail the remarkable level of material and diplomatic support that the US provides to Israel. The exceptional US-Israel relationship, they show, is due largely to the efforts of

organizations and individuals that actively work to steer US policy in a one-sidedly pro-Israel direction.

Jewish History, Jewish Religion: The Weight of Three Thousand Years, by Israel Shahak. The author, who came to Israel in 1945 after surviving the notorious German concentration camp of Belsen during World War II, warns that Israel's right-wing Jewish religious communities and political parties are a long-term threat to Israel and the Zionist movement. Israel's identity as an emphatically Jewish ethno-religious state, and policies based on that outlook – he contends – constitute a danger not only to itself and its inhabitants, but to Jews everywhere, as well as to the peoples and states of the Middle East. Shahak, who was raised as an Orthodox Jew, condemns Israel's systemic discrimination against the non-Jews under its rule. The real test facing both Israeli and diaspora Jews, he says, is their readiness for self-criticism, which must include an unflinching critique of the Jewish past. Shahak insists that the Jewish religion, especially in its classical and Talmudic form, is “poisoning minds and hearts.”

The Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth-Century Intellectual and Political Movements, by Kevin Macdonald. How have Jews acquired such great power and influence in the United States? In this meticulously referenced and compellingly argued study, a professor of psychology at California State University (Long Beach) explains how Jews have profoundly shaped American society, politics and culture to conform with Jewish group interests. This masterly examination of the “Jewish question” – with source notes, bibliography and index – builds on the author's two previous scholarly studies of relations between Jews and non-Jews. The three books were originally issued by Praeger, a leading US academic publisher. In an important 66-page preface written for the later softcover edition, the author sums up the book's main thesis, responds to critics, and tackles such controversial issues as the Jewish role in Communism, the role of “the Holocaust” as a central cultural icon, the Jewish grip on the media, and Jewish efforts to censor the Internet.

As MacDonald shows, Jews are an unusually self-absorbed people with an extraordinarily strong ethnic-cultural group identity. Among non-Jews, they view themselves as permanent outsiders. Throughout history, Jews have played leading roles in campaigns to dismantle and transform the traditional social, political and cultural order of the societies in which they live. In twentieth-century America, MacDonald documents, they have worked diligently and with great success to transform the host society to promote their own group interests.

MacDonald closely examines the tremendous impact of several of the most successful of these Jewish movements, including Sigmund Freud and Freudian psychoanalysis, Franz Boas and egalitarian anthropology, the “Frankfurt School,” and New York City's liberal and neo-conservative intellectuals. MacDonald also traces the important and probably decisive Jewish role in

Marxism, Communism, and 1960s “New Left” radicalism. He details the critical Jewish role in overturning US immigration policy, in conscious opposition to the interests of Americans of non-Jewish European origin. As MacDonald further shows, Jews covertly dominated the African-American “civil rights” movement of the 1940s and 1950s.

Separation and Its Discontents: Toward an Evolutionary Theory of Anti-Semitism, by Kevin MacDonald. This important work focuses on the phenomenon of anti-Semitism, and explains why hostility toward Jews has persisted over the centuries in a wide range of cultures and societies. This scholarly book – with source notes, bibliography, and index – is the second in a trilogy by a professor of psychology at California State University at Long Beach that was originally issued by Praeger, a leading US academic publisher.

The basic thesis of this book is that Judaism and the Jewish role in history can only be fully understood as a group strategy characterized by cultural and genetic segregation from non-Jewish societies combined with resource competition and conflicts of interest with segments of those non-Jewish societies. This cultural and genetic separatism combined with resource competition and other conflicts of interest tend to result in division and hatred within the larger society.

In a review that appeared in the IHR's *Journal of Historical Review*, Peter Harrison wrote that this book “tackles head-on what may be the most diligently suppressed question of our time: Why do people hate Jews? In contrast to the generally available treatments of this issue, MacDonald has produced a study of rare, even shocking forthrightness and scope.” Harrison goes on: “Of all the taboos in American society, none is more powerful than that which limits public discussion about Jews. Though they are only three percent of the population, Jews play a disproportionately powerful – and sometimes decisive – role in the cultural and political affairs of the United States. Jews are so powerful, in fact, that they have been largely successful in suppressing public discussion of their power.”

The Zionist Connection, by Alfred M. Lilienthal. A magisterial, information-packed look at the extraordinary power and influence of the Zionist lobby and the organized Jewish community in American politics, media, and cultural and business life, and their crucial role in shaping US policy in the Middle East. This is the most important work of a courageous and well-educated American Jewish author and publicist who rejected Zionism. Although written some years ago, this book is still informative and revealing. The author provides a well-referenced overview of the origins and trajectory of Middle East history and dynamics, including the sometimes violent conflict between Jews and Arabs over Palestine-Israel. He reviews the little-known record of Zionist terrorism in the region. He takes a close look at the Israeli attack on a US Navy vessel, the *USS Liberty*, that took the lives of 34 US servicemen. He examines the routinely unbalanced US media coverage of the Middle East,

and especially of Israel and the treatment of Palestinians. America's virtually “blank check” support for Israel, the author contends, is fundamentally contrary to authentic US interests and principles. This policy is based not on what's good for Americans and the world, but instead is due to the influence and power of zealously pro-Israel Jews and their supporters. The author shows how Zionists use emotional “Holocaust” and victimhood propaganda, with alarmist cries of “anti-Semitism,” to stoke feelings of guilt and contrition among Americans, and especially Christians, to encourage support for Israel.

The Sacred Chain: A History of the Jews, by Norman F. Cantor. A lucid, eye-opening overview of Jewish life, achievements and tragedy through the ages, packed with arresting observations and insights. This stimulating work is a valuable one-volume treatment of the Jewish experience over the centuries. While Jews have achieved great influence and power in modern America, the author looks to the future with foreboding. American Jewry, he writes, “is demographically disappearing not only through assimilation, the pathological breakdown of family life, and failure to reproduce at the replacement level, but through the racial suicide of a runaway rate of intermarriage.”

The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State, by Benjamin Ginsberg. In this provocative book, the author tackles the question: “Why is it that during so many different times, and in so many different places, Jews have achieved enormous status, wealth, and power only to be cast down, driven out – or worse?” He examines the centuries-old cycle by which Jews first establish a tenuous place in a non-Jewish society, then build on that to achieve economic success and social influence, which enables the forging of alliances with those in power while pushing for their own partisan interests, which then sets off an “anti-Semitic” response that leads to the fall of the regime with which they were allied, as well as their own status and power, followed by a new regime that finally represses, expels or even eradicates the Jewish community.

Wherever Jews have settled, the author shows, Jewish skills, talents and abilities have made them useful to kings, monarchs, prime ministers, commissars and presidents. In return for their usefulness and service, rulers have given Jews support and protection. In this embrace of the state, Jews have risen to positions of great wealth, power and influence. Time and again, however, this status has proven fragile and temporary, as Jews become closely identified with the regimes that aided and protected them. Through the centuries, the author contends, this embrace of the state has ultimately proven to be fatal. Is America, as many argue, an exception to this pattern?

Particularly striking is his review of the tremendous wealth, influence and clout that Jews have achieved in modern-day America. Based on the centuries-old pattern, as well as the still-evolving relationship between Jews and non-Jews in modern America, the author views the future of American Jewry with concern.